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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF THE RURAL SPANISH AMERICAN VILLAGE OF NORTHERN NEW MEXICO.

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THIS SPEECH WAS DELIVERED TO THE NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WAS CONCERNED WITH THE PROBLEMS FACING SPANISH AMERICAN VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO. IT WAS STATED THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL REASONS FOR THE DECLINE OF THE SPANISH AMERICAN FARN VILLAGE INVOLVE THE PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD. SPECIFICALLY, THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MIGRATING TO URBAN AREAS. UNEMPLOYMENT IS WIDESPREAD AND PER CAPITA INCOME IS LOW. MALNUTRITION IS PREVALENT, AND DEATH RATES FROM TUBERCULOSIS AND OTHER DISEASES ARE HIGH. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE INADEQUATE. THE USE OF NATURAL LAND AND WATER RESOURCES IS NOT EFFICIENT. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT INCLUDE A MORE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN IN RESEARCH AND PLANNING PROGRAMS, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, AGRICULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, AND A NEED FOR INCREASED EMPATHY IN ALL PEOPLES. (JS)

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor for me to serve as co-chairman of this panel on the rural village of northern New Mexico. I have come to deeply respect the officers and members of the New Mexico Conference for Human Development. They are men and women who are quite concerned about the quality of New Mexican institutions and ways of life. They are working long and hard to improve the work of private and state agencies and to study basic New Mexican problems and trends. It is also an honor to be associated on this panel with Dr. Sazaki, Dr. Ulibarri, Mr. Vigil, _____, _____ and Mr. Cloud our resource person. I have had the privilege of knowing most of these gentlemen for a number of years. I deplore the fact that living outside the state denies me the opportunity of working with them as closely as was possible when I was living and teaching within New Mexico.

As you know, this panel is concerned with the fundamental trends among the rural northern New Mexican villages, the problems that they are now facing, the causes of these problems, and perhaps some recommendations on their solution. Dr. Sazaki will discuss the Indian rural communities, and I shall try here to bring to your attention some considerations about the rural Spanish-American villages.

The Spanish American rural farm village has been such an accustomed part of northern New Mexican life that there is a tendency in the state to take it for granted. Few New Mexicans realize what a unique settlement pattern it is. Besides the Spanish Americans, only the Mormons, the Louisiana French, and some New England groups live in the farm village. The vast majority of American farm-

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ers have traditionally lived on scattered farms, each physically and socially isolated. However, throughout the world, the vast majority of rural people do live in farm villages.

Economists and sociologists have long quarreled over the relative efficiency of the farm village pattern versus the open country settlement pattern. From the standpoint of efficient commercial farming, the open country neighborhood with each farmer living on his own landholding is the most efficient. What is often forgotten is that from a social and cultural standpoint, the rural farm village is a more efficient and flexible social and human mechanism that deserves greater study and analysis as a settlement pattern from private and government agencies.

The social and financial costs of providing water, sewerage, and electrical services to scattered farms are often staggering. They are provided quite cheaply for the inhabitants of a farm village. A decent network of farm roads is easily and cheaply constructed for a farm village population but not for scattered rural inhabitants. The population of farm villages find it easier to cooperate together and to work together. The stubborn independence of the average American farmer is quite notorious. As Kraenzel has pointed out in his book, GREAT PLAINS IN TRANSITION, the difficulties and problems created by a scattered farm population make adequate economic and social development of a rural area extremely difficult and at times almost impossible. Furthermore, it is far easier to bring industry into farm villages than into an open country neighborhood. These are points that need to be emphasized and repeated, as most of the thinking and planning of private, state, and federal organizations on agriculture in New Mexico and in the United States are based upon the characteristics,values, and problems of the typical American farmer living on his single farm, producing for the market, and in contact with scientific discoveries and

developments. As a result the great majority of farm programs when applied to the northern New Mexican rural farm village or villager usually have failed.

The Spanish American farm village is presently in a state of acute crisis. Some believe that this crisis marks the death throes of the Spanish American culture, the Spanish Americans as a distinctive cultural group, and the Spanish American farm village. There are many in the state who would like to see the end of the Spanish American culture and village structure in New Mexico. Others, like myself, are hoping that this crisis is part of the painful readjustment of this culture and village form to the rather harsh realities of modern technological changes and developments. We feel that the Spanish American farm village pattern is probably an efficient settlement pattern in northern New Mexico in terms of geography, climate, natural resources, and human needs. We would like to see it strengthened and preserved.

It is easy to document the existence of this crisis. Almost all of the predominantly Spanish American counties of New Mexico have undergone since 1940 persistent and large-scale migration of the young and the able to the urban centers of Colorado, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Thus Mora County between 1940 and 1960 lost virtually 60 percent of its total population. Almost all of these counties have extremely high rates of unemployment. Their welfare rates are far above those of the rest of the state. The per capita income of their inhabitants is incredibly low. Malnutrition is common, and the death rates from tuberculosis and related diseases are among the highest in the United States. Their educational systems in spite of the heroic endeavors of devoted teachers and school administrators are shamefully inadequate. The dollar values of their total agricultural production is also extremely low. And finally, their use of present land and water resources is not as efficient as it might be.

The causes of this crisis are not too hard to find. It does, however, involve stripping away the New Mexican convention; that one should not discuss the fundamental differences and values of the major cultural and racial groups in New Mexico, the problems that they face, the conflicts that arise between them, and the conclusion that such racial or cultural factors are inmaterial in considering the basic trends and problems of the state as a whole. It is my fundamental conviction that the basic problems of northern New Mexico are the problems of the Spanish American villages. Northern New Mexico cannot prosper unless the Spanish American villages flourish. New Mexico as a state will always be retarded economically unless northern New Mexico enjoys prosperity. Unless the inhabitants of Albuquerque and other sections of the state begin to pay attention to the needs of the people of the north, they may well have to subsidize them through unemployment and welfare payments.

The basic and fundamental problems of the Spanish American village have both an economic and a cultural component. Economic problems cannot be solved unless major attention is paid to the cultural values, the basic traditions of the Spanish American people, and the often ignored serious difficulties of acculturation, cultural shock, and culture conflicts.

The fundamental cultural cause of the decline of the Spanish American farm village is the process of acculturation. A culture with great achievements in the folk arts, in architecture, in the problems of adjustment to an arid climate, and in the values of the extended family, community life, and attitudes toward life and toward nature, is slowly giving way before the complex technological, materialistic, aggressive culture of Anglo America that in many aspects is weak precisely where the Spanish American culture is strong. At a time when America needs large numbers of bi-lingual people to staff numerous programs in foreign countries and to assist in the comprehension of foreign values and ways of life,

the schools of New Mexico are engaged in the reprehensible program of replacing bi-lingualism by monolingualism or perhaps, rather than developing a proficiency in two languages they are creating an effective illiteracy in both Spanish and English among large numbers of school children. Thus a knowledge of Spanish that could be such an asset becomes a detriment in the present school system. As a result, the morale, the esprit de corps, and the cultural values of the Spanish American are being destroyed. The loss unfortunately is not being replaced by a genuine perception of the core values of the Anglo culture. Unless a genuine cultural renaissance can develop among the Spanish Americans built upon a reinterpretation and defense of their culture and a willingness to maintain their language, they are apt to become a submerged minority existing on the margins of American life. One can recall to mind the cultural renaissance of the Welch language and culture in England and the French language and culture in Quebec as examples which the Spanish Americans might well follow. Furthermore, tourists do not come to New Mexico to see Anglo communities.

Among the economic forces leading to the decline of the village structure of northern New Mexico are: (1) the continued and systematic shift of land from the Spanish Americans to the Anglos either by force or violence or by entrapment in a legal and tax system completely foreign and alien to the Spanish Americans, (2) their treatment in many respects as a conquered people with little attention given to their traditional customs of land and water usage, (3) the failure of private, state and federal agencies since the 1930's to develop regional programs adjusted to the cultural values of the Spanish American villagers and the problems that they face, (4) a school system that has become dysfunctional, (5) the development of sostly flood control and irrigation programs that have led to the massive displacement of Spanish American farmers, (6) the

general decline of agriculture and the small farm in the United States, (7) the persistence of traditional farming practices in a changing World, (8) relatively inefficient marketing practices that work against the interests of the villager, (9) the lack of development of the natural resources of northern New Mexico. And finally, (10) the gradual decline of migrant agricultural labor.

There is much that can be done to remedy the problems and bolster the declining economy of northern Spanish American farm villages. I would like to give a few recommendations that seem to have some value. They are as follows: (1) a realization on the part of public and private organizations that the future of New Mexico is seriously handicapped unless the villages of northern New Mexico can be brought into the stream of economic progress and development, (2) the utilization of the Spanish American village as the basic unit of research, study, and action programs by private agencies and by bureaus and departments of the state and national governments rather than the individual farmer, (3) the development by the State Planning Office, and office manned by a very efficient and capable force, of a comprehensive people centered plan for the economic and cultural development of northern New Mexico based upon respect for, and utilization of existing cultural values and traditions, (4) a development of a community type school system specifically adjusted to the vocational and educational needs of the Spanish American children, (5) the creation of programs on a state and national level specifically designed to improve local water and land usages, (6) the formation of a state handicraft board perhaps as part of the museum program of the state to foster Spanish American handicrafts and provide marketing outlets, (7) the development of a state marketing service for village products such as fruit, chili, vegetables, and christmas trees; to provide grading and inspection services, and to encourage the use of auctions as a

means of sales, (8) the training and development of village leaders, (9) the development of adequate irrigation facilities among the villages financed by the state or federal government utilizing facilities among the villages financed by the state or federal government and using local labor and raw materials, (10) the encouragement and assistence of village marketing and purchasing cooperatives, (11) a land purchase program to buy up land that once belonged to the villages which they have lost and to resell it to them under conditions that will prevent alienation again; (12) a homestead exemption from the land tax of small farms under a minimum acreage such as 10 acres. And finally (13) the growth of an appreciation in the state, sympathy, and a willingness to assist the Spanish American villages such as that which is beginning to surround the New Mexican Indian communities.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity that I have had in expressing my ideas. I trust that they may be of assistence in creating a dialogue between Spanish American, Indian, and Anglo that can strengthen the economy and enrich the culture of a unique state. Thank you.